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ABSTRACT

This briefing paper examines Hawaii's collaboration between the Department of Education (ED) and teacher education institutions, explaining that for over 60 years, this relationship has been highly beneficial. The law that began this collaboration mandated the formation of an advisory group, the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee (TECC). The TECC's objectives are to identify, study, take action, or make recommendations on matters of education of common interest to the Department of Education and institutions of higher learning in Hawaii. The common factor in making the system work is adequate teacher preparation leading to local employment in the ED. One key to success is a principal who knows what is needed and can put a plan in place. School districts must be able to identify priority district needs and promote good teacher development. Educational data are collected from various offices within the district and the ED. Information and data are shared with teacher education institutions via the TECC. The TECC makes recommendations as necessary. The TECC often advises the ED on matters of teacher certification. In the 1970's, the ED helped developed a procedure for certificate reciprocity with other states. In the 1990's, the TECC advised institutions to develop alternative programs for certification. Several suggestions for successful collaboration are presented. (SM)

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PREL BRIEFING PAPER

PACIFIC RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

ED 420 646

Teacher Education in Hawai'i: The Story of a Successful Collaboration

by Dr. Winona Chang*

Legalizing a Collaboration

John Griffin, a Honolulu freelance writer, defines collaboration as "a win-win approach, finding areas of agreement, acting on the best ideas, building trust and moving on to other areas." In 1931, the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) began a collaboration with the teacher education institutions of higher learning in the U.S. Territory of Hawai'i. For more than 65 years, this relationship has been a highly beneficial system in a small, relatively isolated geographic area. The legislature of the Territory of Hawai'i that year enacted a law which installed a process to provide the Hawai'i public schools with adequate classroom teachers in the grades and subject areas needed for the public schools.

The law, Hawai'i Revised Statute 304-20, mandated the formation of an advisory group, the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee (TECC). This law specifies that the committee's objectives are to "*identify, study, take action, or make recommendations on matters of education of common interest to the department of education and institutions of higher learning in Hawai'i.*" The TECC members include the superintendent of the DOE and the dean of the College of Education, University of Hawai'i, and their appointees. After the territory became a state and more institutions of higher education became established, the membership in the committee grew to include the new teacher education institutions.

Identifying Educational Concerns

The language of the law is clear. In analyzing each objective, the reader soon realizes that each objective involves a complex sphere of influence. Because the DOE is the ultimate beneficiary of the committee's work, the first step of identification begins with that client. How does the department itself begin to *identify* matters of education that are of common interest to the DOE and the institutions of higher learning in the state? The obvious common interest is adequate teacher preparation leading to local employment in the DOE.

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The center of the school system is the student. All activities and personnel in the DOE are there because of the students. Without students there is no need for schools. What kind of school and schooling should be provided for the students in the public schools of Hawai'i? The DOE has published two volumes, Essential Content and Student Outcomes for the Foundation Program, to guide the schools in their mission to educate the young people of the state and to organize curriculum content, student services, and other support activities essential to the school as an institution.

What kind of teachers are needed to educate students to meet standards of performance by the time they exit the school system? The DOE has described such a teacher in "Profile of an Effective Teacher." But, how many teachers are needed, what abilities must they have, where are they needed, and why are they needed at those schools?

Role of the Principal

The answers are important and should be as accurate as possible. The key is a principal who, as the school leader, knows the teachers, the students, and the community so well that, with a little assistance from the staff, he/she can identify needs, strengths, and weaknesses. The principal knows what the students need, what the incumbent staff can offer, and what goals and objectives need to be emphasized to improve education at that particular school. In planning for the next school year, the principal gathers all the pertinent information to prepare for staff and material requests.

Role of Other Offices

As principals feed this information to the appropriate district staff, the district is able to identify priority district needs. Each school district then has accurate information on the professional improvement needs of inservice teachers and the need to fill anticipated vacancies due to retirements and transfers. All districts then submit their reports and requests to the appropriate DOE offices for follow-up.

This requirement for careful identification indicates that an organizational procedure is necessary. Therefore, certain personnel and units within the DOE are entrusted with the collected data from schools and districts on enrollment increases or decreases and teacher shortages. The DOE also receives projections based on information issued by other state departments, such as the Department of Business and Economic Development and Tourism, which provides population forecasts for the state.

Armed with the information and data on population shifts resulting from new housing and economic developments, the DOE has the opportunity to prepare for the anticipated changes. The Office of Accountability and School Instructional Support (OASIS) in the DOE may also modify curricular programs based on Board of Education recommendations and mandates. An example is the recent Board's mandate to increase the number and kind of course credits required for high school graduation. School and district curriculum program changes that would impact teacher selection are also identified. New state and federal legislation and Board of Education decisions that impact classroom size are another focus of the DOE's planning and management units.

Study of the Educational Data

Information and data are shared with the teacher education institutions by way of the TECC. The committee meets to discuss the implications the data may have for public education and the teacher preparation institutions in Hawai'i. The work of the TECC fulfills the second objective, to *study* the matter. Accomplishing this objective may not be a long process, especially since all members are already knowledgeable about educational research and innovation and are aware of current concerns and interests of the DOE. The data provided by various DOE department units are compiled and provided to the TECC as needed. The committee then makes recommendations to reorganize teacher education in the institutions of higher learning represented in the TECC. An effect of

. the collaboration is clearly seen in the establishment of teacher in-service credits for college courses that meet DOE needs for teacher improvement.

Follow-Up of Data Review

As committee members work through their discussion and formulation of recommendations, the third and fourth objectives, to *take action* and *make recommendations*, will be met. As gaps and needs for particular content emphases arise, the institutions of higher education incorporate the DOE suggestions into their teacher preparation programs.

In the past, the TECC advised the DOE on matters of teacher certification. After earning a bachelor's degree or a fifth-year diploma granted by a teacher training institution, the graduate applied for a position with the Hawai'i DOE. Department staff would review college transcripts and count credits to verify the teaching major(s) and minor(s). Once employed, the teacher was issued an appropriate teaching certificate.

Interstate Certificate Reciprocity

Approximately 20 years ago, the DOE developed a procedure in concert with the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) for certificate reciprocity. As teachers moved to other states and sought teaching positions, they were often faced with regulations that hindered the immediate issuance of a teaching certificate. NASDTEC members agreed to allow each state to approve teacher education programs at local accredited institutions. Through Interstate Certificate Reciprocity, graduates of locally-approved teacher education programs receive an appropriate teaching certificate upon request. Approved certification programs mean that other NASDTEC members will accept an applicant's Hawai'i certificate and will issue the appropriate state certificate. Hawai'i reciprocates by issuing a Hawai'i certificate to a teacher holding a certificate from another NASDTEC state, based on that state's approved teacher education program.

The program approval procedure was organized with the full knowledge of the TECC. Once a school's program is approved, the DOE no longer needs to count credits, but accepts the statement of the institution of higher education that the student has completed such a program. The program approval process is based on the principles used in school and college accreditation programs. A team comprised of peers from other institutions of higher education and members of the DOE visits the teacher education institution, interviews faculty and students, and submits its recommendations to the DOE for approval or disapproval. This action verifies the effectiveness of the collaboration.

Alternative Teacher Certification Programs

The 1995-96 TECC annual report submitted to the Hawai'i State Legislature contains an example of how the committee accomplished these objectives during the nine meetings that year. The report states that the DOE has an identified need for alternative programs leading to certification for secondary and special education teachers who are already employed in shortage fields. A number of these teachers have been evaluated as excellent by their principals but have been teaching for several years without meeting the basic certification requirements. Two of the fields are science and mathematics. The need for mathematics and science teachers has been evident for several years since the Board of Education mandated additional credits in these subjects for high school graduation.

In *taking action*, the TECC advised the institutions to address the need and develop alternative programs for certification. The report states that the institutions considered the following conditions as part of the alternative programs:

Validation of one to two years of full-time satisfactory teaching in the field for which the certificate is being sought. This validation would satisfy the requirement of student teaching. (Student teaching is a requirement in the regular program for a degree in education.)

A passing score on the appropriate PRAXIS tests and subtests.

Accessible courses for a post-baccalaureate program for temporary teachers in the DOE. (It is necessary that courses be accessible because there are temporary teachers on neighbor islands outside of O'ahu, where the institutions are headquartered.)

Brigham Young University-Hawai'i, Chaminade University of Honolulu, and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa submitted proposals for alternative basic certification programs and have subsequently initiated them. Although the University of Hawai'i implemented an alternative teacher certification program in special education for the 1991-1992 academic year, Chaminade University currently offers the program.

Specific TECC Responsibilities

The statute specifies that the TECC must meet no less than six times in a calendar year. It also includes the committee's responsibilities:

> *"(1) work out problems related to the development of strong teacher training programs at accredited institutions of higher learning in Hawai'i, and (2) identify, study, and discuss educational problems or other educational matters of interest to the committee and to develop findings and make recommendations for the improvement of education in Hawai'i."*

This example shows that the committee addressed the situation, so that the ongoing pre-service programs for teachers would remain strong and yet allow for those effective temporary teachers to meet program requirements without diluting the regular programs. With full knowledge of what each teacher education institution is doing, the TECC has worked to benefit education in the state, so that public school students are provided with quality schooling. The last designated task of the TECC is to *submit an annual report of committee activities to include, if any, recommendations for possible legislative action.*

Changes in Teacher Certification

The picture of teacher certification in Hawai'i is changing, however. In 1995, the Hawai'i State Legislature passed a bill, signed into law, to transfer the responsibility for setting public school teacher certification standards from the DOE to a Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board. This bill mandates that temporary teachers without a teaching certificate will be issued a "credential." The credential will be renewable one year at a time not to exceed three years, providing that the credential holder is actively enrolled in a program leading to certification.

Beginning with the 1997-98 school year, all other teachers in the DOE must obtain a license from the DOE. In-service teachers holding DOE certificates before the 1997-98 school year will be deemed qualified for teacher licenses. The DOE teacher certification standards in effect on June 30, 1995 will remain in effect until the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board adopts new licensing standards. As of September 1, 1997, teaching certificates will no longer be issued by the DOE. According to the DOE Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services, Dr. Donald Nugent, the DOE is still responsible for reviewing transcripts and credentials and for issuing the appropriate teacher licenses.

It will be interesting to see how these changes will impact the TECC. Will Hawai'i Revised Statute 304-20 be revised once more during the next legislative session? When discussing the role of the TECC, Dr. Nugent said, "The TECC has been a strong and viable means to identify and address the needs of both the IHEs [institutions of higher education] and the DOE, therefore enabling a continuing dialogue to problem solve. It is worthwhile to continue the TECC."

Recommendations and Suggestions

When policymakers realize that this report might be useful for their own entities or districts, they may want to review the following suggestions:

- Before initiating a collaboration with teacher training institutions, a school department may want to define beforehand the goals, objectives, timelines, major activities, roles, and responsibilities of the parties involved, and an assessment process. In Hawai'i, the State Legislature mandated coordination by enacting a law. However, it may not be necessary to legislate the activity. Therefore, each department or ministry of education must determine its own starting point.

- Having the Hawai'i Superintendent of Education speak to the School Board concerning the TECC may help to project a more detailed picture of the work of the committee.

- It is strongly recommended that scheduled meetings not be canceled. Changes in dates and times should be by unanimous decision.

- The required persons or roles should be determined beforehand. When the group is convened, members may want to decide on its leadership. Should leadership be a rotating or year-long chairing responsibility, by mutual consent or an elected one? Required products, such as agenda, minutes of each meeting, and year-end report, must be established and not altered, except by unanimous consent.

- Should a Department or Ministry of Education wish to use a similar procedure as that used by the Hawai'i DOE and institutions of higher education, accurate data must be gathered and shared concerning the status of teacher education, recruitment, and employment, information on teacher attrition, and student enrollment figures, actual and anticipated.

- The institutions and the school system must agree on addressing the priority needs identified through data collection, so that the solutions will lead to "win-win" situations. Schools will have teachers who are educated to teach students based on established standards and effective teacher training.

- As situations requiring immediate attention arise, the parties are already teamed to work together for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders.

- Should an assessment of the work reveal that an adjustment needs to be made, the committee can make or recommend the changes as indicated by the review and evaluation.

An agreement to act on the best ideas and to build trust, as stated by Griffin, can only help improve education in the Pacific region.

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